

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE:

R,

Certain good and wholesome ORDERS, for the well-governing of my Family, in a right Christian Conversation, as becometh the Children of the Light and Truth of the Most High GOD. Divided into Two Parts.

JOSHUA, xxiv. 14, 15. Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in Uprightness and in Truth; and put away the GODS which your Fathers served beyond the Flood, and in EGYPT, and serve the LORD: And if it seem Evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this Day whom ye will serve, whether the GODS which your Fathers served that were on the other Side the Flood, or the GODS of the AMORITES, in whose Land ye dwell: But as for me and my House we will serve the LORD.

PART the First.

IMPRIMIS,

AS it becometh us, to whom is made known the only wise, invisible, and omnipotent God; and that heavenly spiritual Worship which only pleaseth him; always to retain him in our Knowledge, with all due Fear, godly Reverence, and sincere Obedience: So more especially, it is my Command in the heavenly Authority, as a Christian Master of my Family, That all in it, and of it, who profess the Truth with me, do meet and assemble every Morning, with all Humility and godly Fear, to wait upon the Almighty GOD our Creator, to receive and enjoy his living Mercies and refreshing Presence, that being sanctify'd by Him, we may Hallow his Name, and return the Praises due to him from Men and Angels for ever.

SECONDLY, That every Day about the eleventh Hour (unless diverted by some extraordinary Occasion) it is also expected, that all come together again, and every one in his Turn, read either the Scriptures of Truth, or some Martyrology, or History of the People of GOD, or Books of Friends, as shall be provided for that Purpose.

THIRDLY, That the same Practice be observed about the sixth Hour in the Evening, to the End, that we may be stirred up as to abhor the Actions of Evil Doers, so to embrace and follow the Example of Patience, Zeal, Holiness, and Constancy of the Righteous, who only were and are of the Flock and Family of GOD.

FOURTHLY, That those Days which are appointed to worship GOD upon, none under any Pretence (if in Health, and not unavoidably engaged to the contrary) neglect going to such Meetings, (as the Manner of some may be) but that they constantly and timely attend and frequent the same, as becometh a Family fearing the Lord, and that is zealous for his everlasting Truth.

FIFTHLY, That there be a Watch kept over every Mind, so that it may not err from the Counsel of GOD, and weighty Government of His Holy Truth, in whatsoever it is exercised about, least Darknes and Deadnes come over it, and the Evil One enter to sow all Manner of evil Seeds, as Strife, Envy, Evil-watching, Levity, Pride, and all such like; and the latter End of such be worse than their Beginning.

SIXTHLY, That every one keep out of unfavourable Words that provoke Lightness, which load the righteous Witness in themselves and others.

SEVENTHLY, That none call each other bad Names, nor give themselves to Wrath or Railing, but if any Thing of Difference should happen, let none sleep upon it, nor the Sun go down upon his or her Wrath, but confess to each other, and seek Peace and pursue it, for that is well pleasing unto GOD.

EIGHTHLY, That though every One have a particular Service appointed, yet that all so live in the Love of Christ Jesus, who wash'd his Disciples Feet, as to be ready and willing to assist each other, for that becometh Brethren and Fellow-servants.

NINTHLY, That all Drunkenness, Lasciviousness, Lying, Defrauding, Emulation, Back-biting, Tale-bearing, Slandering, Cursing, taking the Name of GOD or Christ in vain, Pride, Stubbornness, Flattery, Slothfulness, Falseness, Eye-service, or such like Fruits of Darknes be not so much as named amongst you: For you well know that those who do such Things cannot inherit the Kingdom of GOD; and be assured, that after due Reproof, such shall not continue in my Family.

PHILIP, iv. 8, 9. And whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are pure, whatsoever Things are of good Report; if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise, think on these Things, and the GOD of PEACE be with us.

A COPY of the above ORDERS of DOMESTIC OECOMY, was presented to me a little after the AUTHOR'S Death, by a worthy Friend who liv'd sometime in the Family. And as these RULES are so generally instructive, there is no Household to which they may not in several Respects prove beneficial. That Part relating to religious Conduct, shews what a Spirit of Christian Fervour and Concern then appeared amongst us. And were that Practice of Retirement but imitated in Part, it would be a Means of renewing Spiritual Strength, if we were rightly exercised; for when there is an Abstraction of Body and Mind from the Pursuit of Temporal Things, and a calm Centering down to the ETERNAL ROCK, we thereby give ourselves and Families the fairest Opportunities for the Enjoyment of that Divine Fortitude wherein our Preservation stands.

J. FORSTER.

BIRMINGHAM 3mo. 22. 1751.

BIRMINGHAM: Printed by T. WARREN, Junior, in Litchfield Street; where Printing (both at the Letter and Rolling-Press) is done at reasonable Rates, and as neat and expeditious as at LONDON.

TENTHLY, And as it becometh a Christian Master and Mistress to require nothing from Servants that is not agreeable to the righteous Truth of GOD; so they keeping in their Places, that you all make it solemn Matter of Conscience before the Lord to be upright, faithful, diligent, and obedient towards them, not slighting them because they are your Brethren.

PART the Second.

As I have acquitted my Conscience in expressing what was enjoined me of the Lord, to require from my Family about these Things which particularly relate to GOD'S Holy Worship, and their Christian Duty and Conversation: So was it my Desire to declare my Mind in Matters (tho' of a lesser Nature) yet necessary for the Civil Discipline of my Family. And that now follows as proper to the Division or Table of Orders:

IMPRIMIS,

THAT the Family arise every Morning from the first of the first Month till the first of the third Month about six in the Morning, and from the first of the third Month to the first of the seventh Month about the fifth Hour in the Morning, and from the first of the seventh Month to the first of the ninth Month about the sixth Hour, and from the first of the ninth Month to the first of the twelfth Month about the seventh Hour.

SECONDLY, That all come to Breakfast about the ninth Hour; that all come to Dinner about the Twelfth; and that all come to Supper the seventh Hour.

THIRDLY, That every One take it in their proper Turn to knock or ring all the Rest according to the several appointed Times in their respective Seasons, whether to religious Exercises or Meals, as they shall be ordered.

FOURTHLY, That every Servant after Supper come and render to their Master and Mistress an Account of what has been done the same Day, and receive respective Instructions for the ensuing Day.

FIFTHLY, That every One in their Turn take Care that all Gates and Doors be lock'd and bolted, and all Fires and Candles be extinguished before they go to Bed; and that the Men's Care be in what belongs to the Men, and the Maids in what concerns them.

SIXTHLY, That all retire to Bed about the tenth Hour at Night.

SEVENTHLY, And for the preventing of all disorderly and troublesome Noise in the Family, it is enjoined all to forbear loud Discourses, and to go to the Person they have Business with, and not to bawl and loudly call after them, it being both offensive and unseemly.

EIGHTHLY, That none go to any Inn, or other publick House in the Town, but on Business, first known, and Leave given.

NINTHLY, That none take the Liberty of absenting themselves on any Pretence without Leave first granted them, provided either Master or Mistress be at Home, or such One as by them shall be appointed to oversee the Family. And that the Concern thereof or of another be not divulged abroad, or made publick Discourse.

TENTHLY, That when any One is sent on Errands, they make no Delay, neither enter into unprofitable Talk, but dispatch the Business they are employed about, whether Errands or otherwise, according to their respective Order and Instructions; that all may be done not with Eye-service, but as fearing the Lord, and making Conscience of discharging their several Trusts.

W. P—NN.